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SELECTIONS  
FROM  
THE CORRESPONDENCE  
OF  
GEORGE WASHINGTON,

AND  
JAMES ANDERSON, LL.D.  
F.R.S. F.A.S.E. &c. &c.

Author of several Performances, and Editor of "RECREATIONS IN  
AGRICULTURE, NATURAL HISTORY, ARTS, AND  
MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE.



Charlestown :  
PRINTED AND SOLD BY  
SAMUEL ETHERIDGE.

1800.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE two letters of General WASHINGTON that are given entire, together with the introductory and concluding remarks accompanying them, were published in the *Recreations in Agriculture, &c.* for February last. They are here republished, as a necessary introduction to those that follow; the first of these letters being the answer to General WASHINGTON's letters. The second, from Dr. ANDERSON is the rude draught of a letter to General WASHINGTON, that was written out with an intention to be transcribed, and forwarded by an early opportunity, when the news of the death of that much respected man reached this country: of course it never was sent. In making out this scroll, the pen was allowed to run on with perfect freedom as the ideas occurred. Had the letter itself been made out, the respect due to the man to whom it was written would inevitably have induced a considerable curtailment. It is now published from the idea that the writer and his friends entertain of the importance of the matter treated in it. And

the writer has no hesitation to say, that if the name of the dignified person for whom it was written (and to whom it doubtless would have been sent if he had lived) can have any effect in making it be attended to by some who might otherwise have disregarded it, he will account it a very fortunate circumstance: and if he knew any other honest means that would push it still farther forward upon the public attention, he would willingly avail himself of them; for he is so fully convinced of the unavoidably pernicious tendency of the circumstances here brought under view, in regard to the public, that he would consider no exertion on his part too great, could it but produce that effect; which he is afraid his own insignificance will tend in a considerable degree to frustrate.

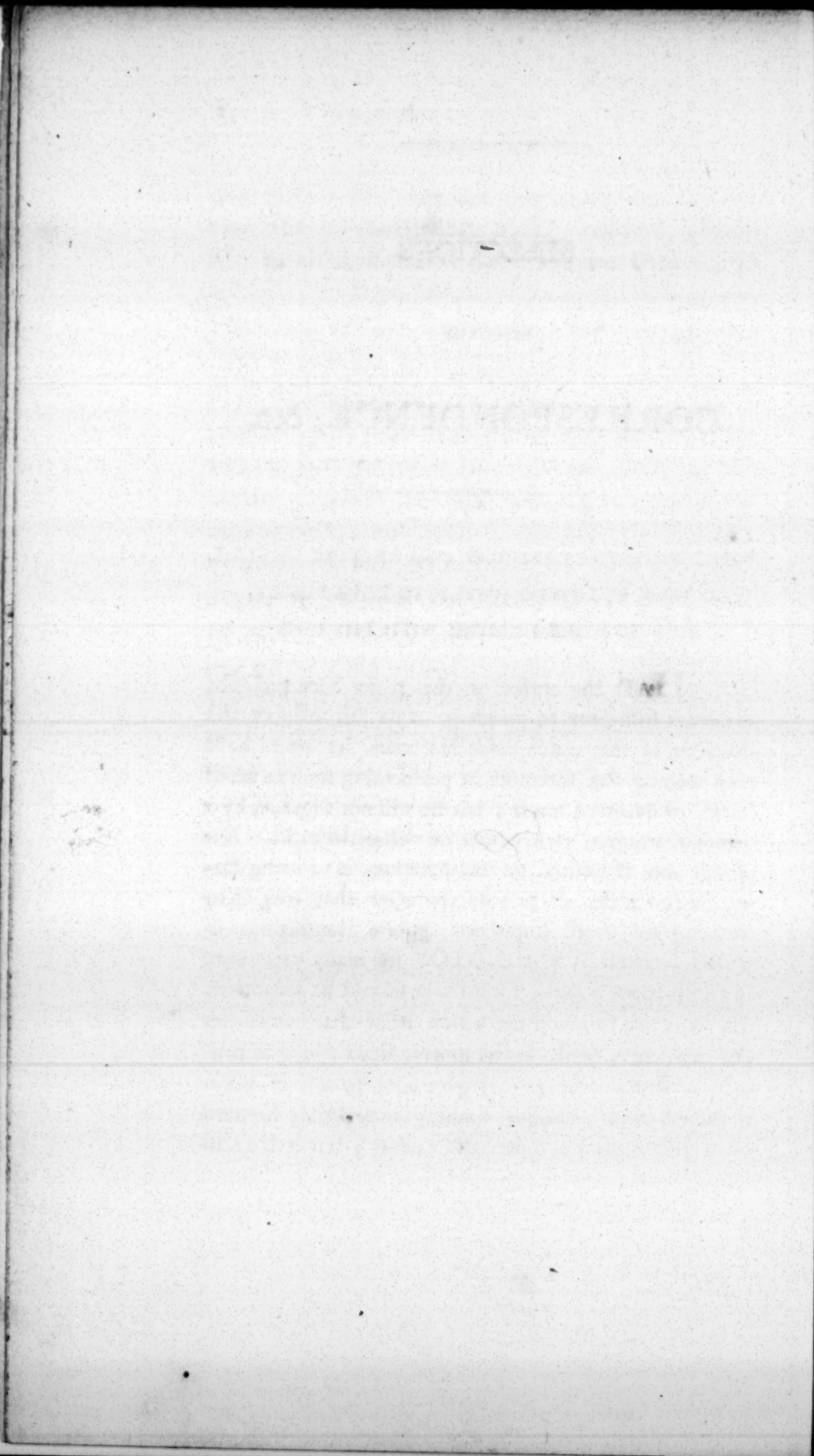
It was not thought necessary, on the present occasion, to make the curtailments above alluded to: the letter is not only given full as it was written, but a few notes, tending to illustrate some positions, have been since added, as also one short passage in the text included in brackets.[ ] Still, however, enormous in length as this letter may appear, it was impossible to illustrate positions, that are not generally recognised, so fully as perhaps to authorise, in the opinion of many who may read it,



#### ADVERTISEMENT.

that degree of earnestness that the writer evidently assumes. This earnestness on the part of the writer arises from a complication of other considerations which could not here be properly introduced ; but which will be gradually developed in the progress of another work, (*"Recreations in Agriculture,"* &c.) should it seem agreeable to the public. In the mean while, the author, though he will never contend with any one for the sake of victory, would rather invite than shun discussion upon the subject ; for this, he well knows, is the only way that truth has a chance of establishing at length her firm dominion among mankind. But he requests that gentlemen, before they write upon this subject, will reflect upon it with great seriousness, as he has done ; for things often appear, on a hasty glance, very different from what they will be found to be on a full investigation. It is with a view to induce that seriousness of reflection that he thinks it necessary here to state, that many circumstances not hinted at in this work, require to be taken into the account before the subject can be fully elucidated.





## SELECTIONS

FROM THE

## CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

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WHAT DOTH THE LORD THY GOD REQUIRE OF THEE,  
O MAN, BUT TO DO JUSTLY, TO LOVE MERCY,  
AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD.

HAD the writer of this paper been possessed of talents sufficient to pourtray in its just colours the character of this much respected man, he would have been among the foremost in performing such an act of justice to departed merit ; but he will not degrade, by a nerveless attempt, that which he wishes to exalt. His utmost aim, therefore, on this occasion, is to bring forward a few traits of private character that may serve to illustrate those important public transactions in which General WASHINGTON for many years bore so conspicuous a part ; for it never should be forgotten, that it is not so much the action itself that constitutes the merit of a deed, as the motive from which it proceeds. Brutal courage may give birth to acts of heroic valour, and insidious cunning may bring forward plans that indicate superlative talents ; but it is recti-

tude of mind alone that can ennoble the hero, and elevate him to that superiority among men which should entitle him to the respectful homage of future ages. It is this consideration that stimulates the writer to step forward on the present occasion; for he well knows, that wherever great reverence is due, malevolence will be busy with degrading insinuations; which, as they must in this instance be entirely of a private nature, and respecting which the world in general cannot have *immediate* means of judging, will be best counteracted by bringing into view some private transactions of the closet, that were never intended to see the light, and in which the heart was allowed to indulge its own propensities without any earthly inducement to make it deviate in the smallest degree from these its native impulses.

To those who judge of characters by the standard that is exhibited of common men in their progress through life, it must, no doubt, appear a very singular phenomenon, that a friendly intercourse by letter, should be carried on for many years between a nameless individual in North Britain, and a man who held so elevated a station, with such exalted respectability among all nations, as General WASHINGTON; and all this without the smallest approximation to political intrigue on either side. Yet so it was: and as this incident, however trifling in itself, serves to mark the real character of the man with such accurate precision as "ignorance cannot misunderstand, nor malevolence misrepresent," it is proper that the circumstances which gave rise to it should be explained with the most undeviating accuracy.

Above a dozen years ago, the writer of this article experienced family losses, which, though of a kind whereto



all men are liable, and which are by many accounted among the most trivial occurrences, yet will ever be felt by some as the severest dispensations that Providence can inflict upon man during his pilgrimage through life. His active energies having been thus deeply depressed for a time, many months were allowed to run on, with scarcely any discrimination to mark time in its progress. At last, however, a due sense of the criminality of such a total dereliction of the duties which his situation in society demanded of him, began to steal across his mind. This induced a feeble effort toward a sort of exertion ; but, like Noah's dove, on his first survey he could find no object in nature sufficient to attract his notice, and was forced to return to the place whence he came. At an after period he conceived a faint idea, which was not, even at first, so unpromising as to prevent him from recurring to it ; and the more he considered it, the more inviting it appeared. Like Don Quixote in his chamber, he cherished the hope, that by proper exertions he might perhaps become the means of being in some measure serviceable to mankind, by publishing a journal, that should have for its object the general diffusion of useful knowledge, the weakening the prejudices among men, and the uniting them more closely in the bands of amity and good will. This idea, which was soothing to a mind weakened by distress, and weaned from the pleasures of the world, was long cherished in secret ; and, at last, without adverting to the weakness of the power by which these things were to be effected, after the lapse of more than two years, a prospectus of the work (to be called *The Bee*) was drawn up, and circulated as widely as the contracted sphere

in which the author moved would admit. A few copies of this prospectus were, by the obliging intervention of the earl of Buchan, transmitted to General WASHINGTON, who received them with a kind partiality, that nothing but the most genuine benignity on his part could inspire. The PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA became from that moment a warm and disinterested patroniser of the intended work. He caused it to be advertised in the American news-papers at his own expense; and at his recommendation the author had the honour of being admitted a member of that very respectable body of men who constitute the philosophical society of Philadelphia; the news of which honour Mr. WASHINGTON communicated with his own hand, accompanied by the most obliging expressions of kindness.

The writer has on many other occasions had reason to feel, that, instead of malevolence, this world abounds in men whose hearts are overflowing with good will; and who, if they can but be convinced of the uprightness of the intention of any one, are ever disposed to receive with the most tender indulgence the efforts, however weak, that may be made to effect any useful purpose; but never did he experience it to such a degree as on this occasion; and he should think himself culpable did he attempt to conceal or to palliate it. Every one must be aware, in cases of this sort, that however doubtful the propriety of such approbation may be in as far as it respects the party obliged, there can be nothing less equivocal in as far as it respects the party who confers the obligation. It is the nature of the human mind to judge of others by its own perceptions of things.



No man ever formed an exalted idea of perfection in the human character, who did not feel in his own mind emotions of a similar kind of exaltation. Every thing viewed thus takes a tint from the internal feelings of the person who views it. The character we form of the Deity himself is, in this way, debased by the imperfections of man ; and every one knows, that in this way hearts glowing with the most sublime sensations are frequently wrung with anguish, on being forced to discern, that the exalted qualities which they thought they perceived in another, had been only the qualities of their own mind, which they mistook for spontaneous emanations from a person by whom the influence of such perceptions, if at all felt, were only experienced in the faintest degree. The kind partiality then of this GREAT MAN upon the present occasion, affords the most decisive proof of the innate existence in his mind of those fine sensations which tended to elevate it far above the level of those of ordinary men.

The correspondence thus begun suffered no interruption at any future period ; and it is probable, that that GREAT MAN had received the answer to his last letter (if indeed it had at all reached him) only a few days before his death ; for the same ship that brought the news to this country of General WASHINGTON's death, also brought intelligence that the parcel which contained that letter had reached Philadelphia. Nor was there ever any abatement in that kind confidence which he had all along reposed in the man whom he deigned to honour, or in that respectful deference in his correspondent, which the gradual display of his amiable character tended so strongly to augment. The



correspondence was entirely of a private and confidential nature ; nor did any thing of a political kind ever interrupt its purer tendencies. The only letter in which any thing of that sort is glanced at, is one which will be laid before the reader in the sequel of this memoir. It behoves the writer, however, to say, that soon after the commencement of this correspondence the General expressed, with a feeling energy, his hope of being able at some future period to retire from the theatre of public life : and there was scarcely a letter in which this idea did not recur. There can be no doubt, therefore, that it had been all along the secret wish of his heart. It did, indeed, appear so evident from the whole tenor of his letters, that he submitted to discharge the functions of the exalted place he held merely as a *duty* that he thought himself bound to perform, though in the doing of it he did violence to his inclination, that the secret wish of his correspondent's heart was, that he might be permitted to indulge his inclination to spend the remainder of his days in the peaceful tranquillity of rural retirement ; which was as clearly expressed as the deference due on his part to the General would permit ; nor has he at this moment a doubt but it was the coincidence of opinion on this his favourite topic, that was the chief cause of that kind partiality with which Mr. WASHINGTON received every little exertion that came from his humble correspondent. The public will recollect the patience with which the PRESIDENT waited till a proper opportunity occurred, and with what discriminating promptitude he embraced that opportunity, when he saw that, without endangering the public tranquillity, he could be permitted to in-

dulge the natural bent of his mind by retiring. This event, when thus explained, will long continue to constitute a distinguished epoch in the history of man : for there is, perhaps, no other instance to be found, of private inclination being so long suppressed without any mark of the petulance of affectation, or of power being deliberately resigned without the smallest influence of peevishness or any other wayward affection leading thereto. After this event had taken place, he thus writes from Mount Vernon, April 7, 1797. " I am  
" once more seated under my own vine and fig-tree,  
" and hope to spend the remainder of my days,  
" which in the ordinary course of things (being now  
" in my sixty-sixth year) cannot be many, in peaceful  
" retirement ; making political pursuits yield to the  
" more rational amusement of cultivating the earth."  
And in November of the same year, he recurs to the subject in the following terms. " Freed, as I now am  
" from the toils, the cares, and responsibility of public  
" occupations, and engaged in rural and agricultural  
" pursuits, I hope (aided by the recollection of having  
" contributed my best endeavours to promote the happiness of that country which gave me and my ancestors birth) to glide peaceably and gently on in the  
" shades of retirement, and with good will to all men,  
" until *my time* shall be no more. In doing this I  
" promise myself more real enjoyment than in all the  
" bustling with which I have been occupied for upwards  
" of forty years of my life, which, as the wise man says,  
" has been little more than *vanity and vexation*." Such was the general train of ideas that prevailed throughout the whole of the letters of this truly respecta-

ble man ; not even excepting that one which the writer hopes to be excused for now laying before the public, although in it the General touches upon political subjects with a degree of animation that certainly was very unusual with him ; and that strongly marks the indignant feeling which the attempt, as he conceived it to be, to destroy the independence of the nation, had excited in his bosom. As this letter was intercepted by the French, it may not be thought very improbable, considering the person by whom it was written, that it might have been conveyed to the Directory of France ; upon whose minds, if so, it must have made a considerable impression, and might hereafter be published in a mutilated state. A duplicate of this letter was sent under a cover containing a few lines which came safe. Both these letters and all the others were written with Mr. WASHINGTON's own hand, and are here copied with the most scrupulous accuracy, even to the *italics* as marked by himself. A word or two which had been omitted in transcribing have been supplied by conjecture, and put between brackets.[ ] For the view with which the letter is printed, it would have been obviously improper to have omitted any part of it. Let this serve as an apology for such parts of it as peculiarly respect the person to whom it was addressed.



DR. JAMES ANDERSON, *in or near London,*

*Philadelphia, Dec. 10, 1798.*

" ESTEEMED SIR,

" HEARING that the ship (Suffolk) by which the  
" enclosed letter was sent was captured by the French,  
" who never restore any of mine, I do, to avoid the  
" imputation of inattention to your favours, and the  
" correspondence with which you honour me, send a  
" duplicate ; being, with very great esteem and regard,  
" Sir,

" *Your most obedient and*

" *obliged humble servant,*

" G. WASHINGTON."

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(DUPLICATE.)

TO THE SAME.

*Mount Vernon, 25th July, 1798.*

" ESTEEMED SIR,

" YOUR favour of the 8th of February came safe,  
" and would have received an earlier acknowledgment  
" if any thing had sooner occurred worthy of commu-  
" nication.

" I hope you have not only got relieved of the fever  
" from which you were then recovering, but of the  
" languor with which it had affected you, and that you  
" are now engaged in the literary pursuit of which you  
" gave the outlines ; and which, with your pen and  
" arrangement of the subjects, must be curious, en-  
" tertaining, and instructive. Thus persuaded, if you

“ propose to carry the work on by way of subscription,  
“ it would give me pleasure to be numbered among the  
“ subscribers.

“ I little imagined when I took my last leave of the  
“ walks of public life, and retired to the shades of my  
“ vine and fig-tree, that any event would arise *in my*  
“ *day* that would bring me again on a public theatre :  
“ but the unjust, ambitious, and intoxicated conduct of  
“ France towards these UNITED STATES has been, and  
“ continues to be such, that they must be opposed by a  
“ firm and manly resistance, or we shall not only haz-  
“ ard the the subjugation of our government, but the  
“ independence of our nation also ; both being evi-  
“ dently struck at by a lawless, domineering power,  
“ who respects no rights, and is restrained by no trea-  
“ ties when it is found inconvenient to observe them.

“ Thus situated—sustaining daily injuries, even in-  
“ dignities with a patient forbearance, from a sincere  
“ desire to live in peace and harmony with all the  
“ world ; the French Directory, mistaking the motives  
“ and the American character, and supposing that the  
“ *people* of this country were divided, and would give  
“ countenance to their nefarious measures, have pro-  
“ ceeded to exact loans (or, in other words, contribu-  
“ tions) and to threaten us, in case of non-compliance  
“ with their wild, unfounded, and incoherent com-  
“ plaints, that we should share the fate of Venice and  
“ other Italian States.

“ This has roused the people from their slumbers, and  
“ filled their minds with indignation from one extrem-  
“ ity to the other of the union ; and I trust, if they  
“ should attempt to carry their threats into effect, and  
“ invade our territorial as they have done our commer-

“ cial rights, they will meet a spirit that will give them  
“ more trouble than they are aware of in the citizens of  
“ these States.

“ When every thing sacred and dear to freemen  
“ is thus threatened, I could not, consistent with the  
“ principles which have actuated me through life, re-  
“ main an idle spectator, and refuse to obey the call of  
“ my country to head its armies for *defence*; and there-  
“ fore have pledged myself to come forward whenever  
“ the exigency shall require it.

“ With what sensations, at my time of life (now  
“ turned of sixty-six) without ambition or interest to  
“ stimulate me thereto, I shall relinquish the peaceful  
“ walks to which I had retired, and in the shades of  
“ which I had fondly hoped to have spent the remnant  
“ of a life worn down with cares in contemplation on  
“ the past, and in [the enjoyment of] scenes present  
“ and to come of rural growth, let others, and especially  
“ those who are best acquainted with my ways of think-  
“ ing, decide; while I, believing that man was not de-  
“ signed by Providence to live for himself alone, shall  
“ prepare for the worst that can happen.

“ The gardener you were so obliging as to send me  
“ continues to conduct himself extremely well. He is  
“ industrious, sober, and orderly, and understands his  
“ business. In short, I never had a hired servant that  
“ pleased me better; and what adds to the satisfaction  
“ is, that he himself is content; having declared that  
“ he never was happier.

“ My best wishes always attend you; and with great  
“ esteem and regard I am, Sir,

“ *Your most obedient and*

“ *obliged humble servant,*

“ G. WASHINGTON.”



## REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE ABOVE.

To a mind susceptible of the impressions of true religion What are the allurements of glory and of power ? The pomp of royalty it contemplates as the scintillations of the glow-worm, which only serve to mark the place of an insect for a few moments, that must soon be extinguished forever. As to human power, What is its amount ? The most absolute monarch upon earth, when surrounded by those minions ever ready to execute his will, Can he save his greatest favourite from the languor of disease, the decrepitude of age, the anguish of disappointed hope, or the terrors of approaching dissolution ? His efforts in this case are equally unavailing with those of the meanest of the human race. His power then is only mighty to do mischief. He can destroy a city ; lay a whole country desolate, or can involve, perhaps, a great part of the universe in one indiscriminate ruin. And is this the glorious privilege which is the object of the general cupidity of mankind ? It is indeed the whole. Yet the beneficent mind, who views it at a distance, cannot be easily brought to draw this just conclusion. It rears up plans of ideal benignity, which it hopes the possession of human power would enable it to realise. In raising these ideal fabrics of perfection, it pursues the path which nature chalked out as the true road to happiness and peace ; and from which no human being can ever be excluded. They are all alike allowed to contemplate it in prospect, and all alike are prohibited from being able to reach it in reality. The good that the monarch desireth to perform, like that of the abject prisoner in

the dungeon, is nearly alike resolvable into an ineffectual wish. The prejudices, the passions, the imperfections, and the vices, of those he wishes to serve, for ever oppose the beneficent views of the most powerful among men; but, above all, the weaknesses of his own heart, the errors of his judgment, and the imperfections of his understanding, throw bars perpetually in his way that no exertions on his part can overcome. Owing to these causes the good that he wished to do he finds, when too late, has on many occasions been productive of evils he could not foresee, and which above all things he wished to shun. It is then that he feels, with a poignancy of regret, the justice of the sentence of Solomon, that all the enjoyments he hoped to derive from this source end only in disappointment. Incessantly urged on, however, by the current of events, while in that high station, to *act*, where his own judgment would induce him to *deliberate*, he finds that it is productive only of vexation of spirit. Can any thing be more natural than for such a man to look forward with complacency to that calm serenity which can alone be enjoyed in domestic retirement, while surrounded by those whom the heart wisheth to cherish; where undisturbed he can be permitted to look forward to that better country where error and disappointments are unknown; where hope shall be completed in fruition; where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Such were evidently the sensations of the man who is the object of our present contemplation. Can we wonder then that his progress through life was dignified, and his latter end tranquillity and peace?



(COPY.)

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON, *Mount Vernon, Virginia.**Isleworth, near London, April 15th, 1799.*

HONOURED SIR,

I WAS favoured, about two months ago, with your obliging letters of the 10th of December and 25th of July last ; for which I beg you will accept my most grateful thanks.

I cannot help sincerely regretting, that any event should have taken place to interrupt that tranquillity which you hoped to enjoy in your rural retreat ; but I trust that things are now in such a train as to prevent the necessity for your being ever obliged to take the field in that cause. This, however, will be best effected by your being fully prepared against the worst, in case it should happen.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the *intoxicated nation*, which you have with so much justice and energy characterized, should have acted so incautiously as to open the eyes of *your people* to the real objects it aimed at, and thus to have created a unanimity at home, which alone could give energy to your truly patriotic efforts ; and which, I trust, will be preserved, notwithstanding the insidious schemes of a cunning unprincipled people, who will, no doubt, exert all their influence to destroy it. The same circumstances have operated strongly in this nation, and have given a power to government that it did not use to possess, but which, I trust, will finally frustrate the views of that ambitious nation, that hoped to avail itself of the wicked machinations of a desperate *few*, who, in their turn, had no



doubt of being able to raise themselves to power by inflaming the minds of a deluded populace, that may at all times be easily led astray by sophistical arguments respecting subjects which are beyond the reach of their limited comprehensions fully to understand. If the powers of Europe in general had dared to think and to act with the same degree of energy that the American States have done, the evil might have been remedied long before this time. But, in order, as it would seem, to punish the sins of a guilty world, the horrors of war have been suffered to continue thus long, and to devastate many nations. How much longer the weakness of men may suffer it to exist, and whether this devouring flame will be at last finally extinguished otherwise than by a want of fuel to feed it, I cannot pretend to say ; though I am willing to hope the best ; nor is there any thing which I so ardently wish to see, as peace and tranquillity restored to Europe and all its connexions.

In the mean time, I consider it as a not uninteresting speculation, to try to appreciate the present, and probably future, effects of this inveterate *mania* upon the persons who are more immediately within the sphere of its influence, as few subjects can tend so much to display the extreme imbecility of the human mind ; and the same observation may be applied to most of those plans which man devises for his own aggrandisement.

France is at present engaged in a grand struggle for power. *Her* object is, in the first place, to aggrandise herself ; and, in the next place, to depress Great Britain, her old and dreaded rival. She has been, in some respects, as successful hitherto in her warlike efforts as she could expect. [The reader will advert to the time

when this letter was written.] But how do these successes operate? Not in promoting her own strength and stability, but in weakening it; not in diminishing the wealth and prosperity of Britain, but in augmenting them. In this point of view, then, she has been fighting the battles of Britain against herself. Every victory that she gains carries away from France a multitude of her people, who are never to return. These drains (like those of a similar sort which issued from Spain while in the zenith of her power, during the long æra of her continued conquests in Italy and Germany, which paved the way at length to the emancipation of the best part of the Netherlands from the Spanish yoke) must leave her in a state of exhaustion that will soon sink her below the level of nations on which she now looks down with contempt. Every conquest that she makes enables her to take money from industrious men, and throws it into the hands of rapacious plunderers, who make no other use of it than to purchase objects which minister directly toward their own immediate gratification. But of whom are these objects to be had? Of the English alone. The manufactures of France, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Holland; of every place, in short, into which the ravages of French principles have extended (unless we except the pure necessities of life alone) are absolutely ruined by reason of the insecurity of property, which prevents it from becoming an object of general attention. These former rivals of Britain being thus destroyed, the market of the whole world becomes open to her alone; and thus the French have made themselves the caterers for England. That wealth of which her armies become occasionally possessed, remains



not with France; it never, indeed, comes within the verge of her territories, but is poured with a prodigal hand into the lap of England, whom it ultimately tendeth to enrich. Have we not farther seen, that at a time when English goods were seized wherever they could be found in France; at that very moment when the Directory were talking of ruining the manufactures and annihilating the resources of England, that very Directory found itself constrained to overrule the law, and to permit English cloth to be imported there *duty free*, because, as they alledged, without that supply they could not clothe their armies? A thing that never before was done, even when the nations were in the strictest terms of amity and peace. Thus France, while she busies herself, like the bee, in trying to amass treasures, as she thinks, for herself alone, is, in truth, busied only in providing stores to feed the greedy appetite of her hated rival, who without compunction successfully exerts her best energies to take it away and apply it to her own use, before her rival hath had time to be benefited by it.

In yet another way does France exert her influence, in the most direct manner, to augment the power, and add to the revenue, of Britain, while she at the same time proportionally weakens herself and diminishes her resources. The naval power of Britain hath of late increased to such a degree, as to have become a matter of astonishment to herself as well as to all other nations, while that of her former rivals hath sunk almost into total insignificance. This circumstance, however, ought, in truth, to excite no surprise, as it is a necessary consequence of the French operations; and this inequality must of necessity increase as long as the present contest



shall be continued. With an inconsiderate precipitancy which hath no parallel that I know of in the history of civilized nations, the popular rulers of that country, among the first exertions of their power, dismantled their navy, in order to augment for a moment the power of their army. This ill judged measure could never by any means be remedied by her. The French fleet on the first of June severely felt the consequences of that error. Her rival became then of course decidedly superior to France at sea. In consequence of this superiority, thus decisively obtained, there are at present upwards of thirty thousand of the best mariners of France in the prisons of Great Britain ; and every day adds to their number (for one small privateer, almost the only vessels now fitted out in France, contains as many sailors as half a dozen of our good merchantmen.) These men are daily dying out. How is this deficiency to be supplied ? Not by breeding up seamen in the merchant service as formerly ; for they now fit out no vessels of that sort :—not by privateers ; for the cruizes of these vessels are usually of no more than a few days duration, or at most a few weeks (during which time they can learn little) before they are captured :—not by their ships of war ; for these scarcely ever dare venture out of port :—not by their fisheries ; for, being unable to protect the persons of the fishermen while at sea, they are obliged to abandon that employment. Thus is the nursery of seamen, as to them, entirely ruined. And without seamen, of what use is a navy ? Every one knows that, under these circumstances, it exceeds the power of man ever to create a respectable navy ; and we are, doubtless, to attribute, in a great measure, to this cause the amazing superiority of Brit-

ish ships when opposed to those of France, which hath been of late remarked in every naval rencounter. The same observation will also strongly apply to the naval power of Holland, Spain, and the Italian States who are leagued with France ; from whose ports it is only a chance vessel that can escape the vigilance of British cruizers.

While the seamen belonging to all these powers are thus daily dying out, and scarcely any are breeding up to supply their place, the case is far different with us. The merchant ships of Britain are increasing every day ; they are spread over all the seas on this globe, and are thus training up for her, in every quarter of the world, a numerous set of hardy mariners, to supply her future navies in abundance whenever they shall be wanted. The beam being thus once turned towards one side, additional weight is daily pouring into the heaviest scale, while that in the lightest is decreasing, so as to prevent the possibility of even a tendency towards a vibration. As our men are thus increasing while those of the enemy are decreasing, so our ships of war are proportionally augmenting at their expense. They make great exertions to build ships in order to supply their daily waste ; but these ships are chiefly built for our use : they must either be left to lie rotting in their harbours, or, if they venture out to sea, they are seldom permitted to return without having suffered a considerable diminution ; they are taken by us, and add to our store. (A)

(A) See the notes at the end.



From this plain statement of undeniable facts, it is very obvious, that the exertions of France with a view to extend her influence over all nations have a direct and unavoidable tendency to weaken herself, and at the same time to augment the wealth and the power of Great Britain, the most hated, because the most successful of all her enemies. We have no opportunity, it is true, of knowing distinctly what are the effects on its interior, at the present moment, of this very singular policy of that perturbed nation ; but from what we know respecting ourselves, it is no difficult matter to see towards what point it tends, though we cannot indicate the precise mode in which it operates. That property is insecure in France, and therefore the spirit of exertion weakened, no one can doubt : that all her manufactures for foreign parts have ceased to be carried on, is undeniable ; not only on account of the destruction and pillage of the capitalists who carried on these manufactures at Lyons and elsewhere, but also because of the impossibility of transporting them : that her foreign trade is thus nearly annihilated, and with that the revenue which accrued from that source entirely dried up, is a self-evident proposition ; and that from all these derangements of the political economy, numbers of persons must be thrown into embarrassed circumstances, can easily be conceived, though we had no corroborative reports of this sort whatever.

That wealth, on the contrary, has flowed into this nation since the beginning of the present war in a fuller stream than ever was known before, is obvious ; not alone from the reasoning above stated, but from innumerable other proofs, which nobody at the present day will venture to gainsay. “ The universal poverty pro-

duced by the war," was, no doubt, a subject of very general declamation till of late, and was seriously believed by many persons ; though it was, at the same time, universally admitted, that men in every station of life in this country expended more money on food, lodging, dress, and amusement, than ever they had been before known to do. This circumstance became at last so clearly obvious to all, as to make the declaimers ashamed of themselves, and they are now in a great measure silenced. Sensible men, however, have been long conscious of our increasing wealth, and have not scrupled to say so ; as they found no difficulty in reconciling the general wish of individuals to have more wealth, and consequently the universal cry of want, with the rapid increase of prosperity ; for where all know, that in consequence of that prosperity, much profit can be made of any capital, each will be eager to have a larger proportion of that capital than he can easily obtain. They were not, therefore, in the smallest degree surprised to observe, that although within these two years past, taxes have been imposed on this nation to such an extent that no man, half a dozen years ago, would have been hardy enough to believe that they could have been tolerated ; yet these have been paid almost without a murmur, and without being sensibly felt by the people at large. The income tax imposed this year, I should have no hesitation to say, would be so productive as to astonish all surrounding nations, could it be fairly and equally carried into effect ; but of this there is great reason to doubt. It is not above a week since Lord Grenville made a statement in the House of Peers of the progress of the trade of Britain of late years. It appeared, from that statement, that the value of our trade



(imports and exports) on an average of four years preceding the war, viz. 1789, 90, 91, and 92, amounted to £.72,689,000, and that in the year 1798 these amounted to £.94,963,000; so that the increase during that period is £.22,274,000, which is nearly one third part of the first sum.

To such persons as believe that the stability of States, and the happiness of a people, are to be measured exactly by the amount of their wealth, and the extent of their foreign trade and manufactures, these facts will be deemed of the most soothing nature for Britain; but to me they convey not any such idea. Nations, like individuals, have not their happiness augmented in proportion to the increase of their riches. They generally act with much more propriety when they are in moderate circumstances, than when superabounding in wealth. Power engenders pride, haughtiness, and a most intolerable self-sufficiency; this disgusts those with whom they must have dealings, and encourages rivals. It creates enemies at the same time; enemies, whose ill will is only displayed at the first in secret; but by and by they become open and declared as such. Wars of course follow, and many evils which it would be painful to enumerate. These evils will be, to you, very obvious, and might have been (or rather may be) foreseen by our rulers, whose duty it should have been to counteract their influence. This, I am sorry to say, has not been done. Owing to the greater profits that are to be made in trade or manufactures than in agriculture, at the same time that such persons are more independent of others, and at greater liberty to act as occasion may require, young men of spirit and enterprise naturally prefer the first, and neglect the last. Fiscal reg-

ulations might easily be adopted to counteract in some measure this evil ; but this has not been attended to. Some late taxes, particularly the salt tax and the income tax, have a direct contrary effect ; for they press much more heavily on country gentlemen and farmers, than on those who are engaged in trade and manufactures : bad is thus made worse, and a spirit of turbulence and insubordination is diffused among the lower orders of society, which must break out on the first check that business, in their particular line, experiences ; and this must give rise to a system of coercive government that is only productive of general misery, and individual distress ; not to mention the discontents that are the never failing attendants on the occasional recurrence of years of scarcity, which are inevitable where this system of economy is adhered to.

None of these effects would have been experienced if the less brilliant but more steady operations of agriculture had been duly cherished and encouraged. There would have been no difficulty in finding other sources of productive taxes here, had they been sought for ; but it too often happens in financial arrangements, that men overlook the only *certain* means of augmenting the revenue, viz. that of adopting measures to promote the health of the body politic in all its members ; and, instead of supplying the goose with plenty of nourishing food to make her with certainty lay abundance of golden eggs for many years to come, in their eagerness to get all the eggs at once, they kill the goose herself, and thus cut off the source of that future supply which would have been certain. Such, Sir, are the reflections which occur to my mind, when I contemplate this important subject : but I



interfere not with the department of any one. Of too little importance to have any influence on the political system, I see these things as if I saw them not ; and quietly go forward in my retired course of life, without annoying others, or perplexing myself about things that I cannot mend.

Having in some measure regained my usual state of health, I have, at last, begun the work that I had in contemplation, the first number of which will accompany this ; and which (entitled, *Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, Arts, and Miscellaneous Literature*) I beg you will honour with your acceptance, as a small testimony of the most respectful esteem and warmest attachment on my part. It can lay claim to that honour on no account but one, which is, that, however my judgment may err, it is my sincerest wish that every line in it may be calculated, in one way or other, to promote the welfare or happiness of some human being ; and it shall be my uninterrupted study to make it do so. At my time of life (now declining into the vale of years) disengaged as I am from all those worldly pursuits which excite the active energies of most men, things appear under a very different aspect from what they did in the morning of life : feeling not the smallest tincture of ambition, nor the stimulating impulse of the love of gain, I stood in need of some object that could give a little activity to the mind, so as to suffer the thread of life to be spun out till the period of its termination shall arrive, without experiencing in too strong a degree that languid apathy which is the unavoidable attendant on total inactivity. In casting about for this kind of stimulus to exertion, I could discover none that promised to be either so steady in its

effects, or so pleasing in its operation, as that which I have chosen. For as I have come under certain obligations to the public, I cannot consider myself to be at liberty, in case of any fit of indolence, to abandon it; and therefore must go on, unless very powerful reasons shall oppose it. As the mind must thus be steadily directed at all times towards an object that has ever been strongly interesting to me, I hope it will prove an agreeable *recreation* [the title I have chosen for my book] to myself at least; to insure which, I have determined, that while it is continued, not one word shall be admitted into it that does not appear to me to be calculated to answer the purpose above stated. It is, therefore, probable, that the work will assume a tone somewhat different from most publications, the authors of which are in general actuated by considerations that can have scarcely any effect upon me. How far the public may relish a performance conducted in this manner, or whether I shall be able to carry it into effect in the way I propose, remains to be ascertained. In all events my part is taken; nor shall I on that account be subjected to any embarrassment. Should the sale be such as not fully to indemnify the expense of carrying it forward in a *proper* manner, I shall, without hesitation or struggle of any sort, relinquish the work; conceiving that to be the most unequivocal criterion that can be adopted, either that the plan is improper, or the execution deficient; and I shall in this respect be directed by the public.

The succeeding numbers of this work shall be forwarded to you as soon as an opportunity offers after the publication of each: I am only at a loss to know through what channel they may with most safety be sent. Will



you have the goodness to let me know the name of your bookfeller in Philadelphia? They might be forwarded to his care.

It gives me much satisfaction to learn, that the gardener behaves himself properly; for I was anxious on that account. A good servant is, in this country, a rare acquisition. It does not always happen that a good master meets with such; but he has a much better chance for it than others. I hope he will continue to please.

I beg pardon for the length of this letter which was occasioned by a desire to give you an idea of the internal state of this country at present, which I believe to be correct.

I have the honour to remain, with the most respectful esteem, Sir,

*Your much obliged and*

*very humble servant,*

JAMES ANDERSON.

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(COPY.)

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON, *Mount Vernon, Virginia.*

*Isleworth, near London, Jan. 10, 1800.*

HONOURED SIR,

THE 9th and 10th numbers of my Recreations, which will come along with this, are entrusted to a private hand who is going to Philadelphia, and who has undertaken to forward them to you at Mount Vernon. I embrace this opportunity of writing, chiefly to inform

you that all the foregoing numbers of that work have been forwarded to you at different times as opportunities offered, addressed to the care of Dr. James Maese, of the College of Health, Philadelphia, who has shewed himself at all times most ready to oblige. I hope they have arrived safe, as also my letter of the 15th April last, which accompanied the first number.

It gives me great pleasure to find that the political differences between the United States and France are now, to appearance, in such a train as will I hope prevent the necessity of your being ever called on to leave your quiet retreat for the purpose of opposing any hostile attempts from that quarter ; and I hope you will long continue to enjoy the soothing tranquillity which is the natural result of rural pursuits to a mind at peace within ; and which feels not the perturbation that results from desires that it dares not avow to the world, and strives in vain to conceal from itself. Blessed is the peace of the upright in heart ; and vain are the hopes of those who search for it in any other way !

It gives me pleasure to be able to say that the favourable opinion I have long entertained of mankind at large, continues rather to gain than to lose ground, from the result of daily experience. It was from a firm conviction that man is naturally beneficent and kind, and at all times disposed to judge justly and with favour of another, where they themselves are not a party in the cause, that I was induced to attempt the work in which I am engaged (*Recreations in Agriculture, Natural History, &c.*) upon the principles I indicated to you in my last. It is true, that I was not quite free from apprehensions respecting the success of an experiment so bold



as that on which I ventured : but the opinion just stated induced me to try ; and the experiment has succeeded. I did not indeed risk as much in making that experiment as most other men would have done, so that it required the less courage on my part : for as I never had the smallest pretensions to literary fame, I had nothing to dread on that score, should the attempt have failed : as the accumulation of wealth was never an object that I regarded as of much importance, even in the younger part of life, when a numerous family rendered it necessary to be adverted to in a certain degree ; so it is not to be supposed that it should be an object of much concern on that head now, when that family is nearly all provided for by their own industry, and I have nothing but my own poor self to look after. Being stimulated neither by vanity nor ambition of any sort, I ran no risk of receiving a shock in relinquishing the work on these accounts. Had my experiment not succeeded then my part was taken : I should have retired entirely from the public scene, and neither have given trouble to myself nor any one else about things that did not appear to interest them. From these considerations I set out with the resolution either to express what my own mind dictated as just and right on all occasions, with the utmost candour in my power ; or not to go on with it at all. Hence you will find it assumes a firm (I had almost said a rigid) tone that is very unusual ; and that I was afraid many persons would think rather indicated vanity and presumption on my part, than a sincere desire to benefit the reader. It gives me much pleasure to find that this has not been the case ; for this work has been received by the public with a most

tender indulgence, or favour rather ; which lays me under the most powerful obligations to do the best I can to make a suitable return.

You will easily perceive my great object in this work is to endeavour to induce my readers to observe objects with their own eyes, and to think and reason in all cases for themselves, and thus acquire that independence of mind in literature which alone can give firmness and energy to research. The first step in this process is to give frequent instances of the weakness of the human powers, and the small advances that have been yet made by man in any kind of attainment : of course to check that blind respect for great names which tends so much to enfeeble the mental powers. This requires but little exertion on my part ; for it is a great many years since I had occasion to remark, that the greatest men are only great in certain respects, and wonderfully weak and fallible in others. I have therefore been accustomed to expect to find among them, as others, frequent errors of judgment ; nor have I ever yet met with an exception to that rule. Knowing this then from the most perfect conviction, I feel it not as a degradation to any character to discover weaknesses or errors in it, and these I shall point out occasionally as things of course, without the most distant intention to depreciate their character. It will not be, then, in the least surprising if I should be found to approve and to blame the same person in the same paragraph, and that both shall be done with equal frankness and cordiality ; for I despise that little affectation of refined delicacy which consists of whimpering apologies and disguised insinuations, tending to lower the character of a person whom they



dare not openly blame. I have no desire to lower the character of any human being, I am not conscious of entertaining a thought of any one that I am either afraid or ashamed to express; and I take pleasure alike in doing justice to bad men for the little good that belongs to them, as in giving cordial applause to the deserving part of mankind, wherever it can with justice be done. (B) I judged it necessary to mention these circumstances, to obviate some prejudices you might have felt on reading some passages of that work.

The only circumstance of importance affecting this country, concerning which I can give you any information at present that can justly lay claim to a greater authenticity than a news-paper, is what respects the scarcity of grain with which this country is threatened at present, and which has occasioned no inconsiderable degree of alarm, especially among our legislators and the higher orders of the people. To me it occasioned no sort of surprise, because I consider it as a necessary consequence of those political arrangements I alluded to in my last, which tend to make agriculture a subordinate business, and therefore to retard the progress of that beneficent art far beyond others. In this opinion, however, it is but fair to say that I am not among the majority; with whom, were we to take words alone as an evidence of facts, it would seem that no art is so much cherished as agriculture by every individual in high rank in this country, as well as the legislature at large; as any one, by looking at our news-papers and periodical publications, must naturally infer. The case appeared to me, however, I am sorry to say it, to be far otherwise. The real spirit of the times seems to be to depress agricultural opera-

tions ; though this I do not ascribe to a systematic plan of doing so, but rather to an ignorance of the circumstances that would tend to promote it. Were I possessed of talents and influence sufficient to counteract this baneful prejudice, I should deem myself singularly fortunate ; but the time seems not to me to be yet arrived in which that can be done, without the aid of talents far superior to any to which I could lay claim. We must therefore wait with patience until that time shall come. That you may not, however, imagine that these notions proceed merely from a discontented spirit, I shall beg leave to state a few facts that will, I hope, be sufficient to show that I have not taken up this opinion without a due degree of consideration.

It is an undisputed maxim, that the best encouragement for any manufacture is a steady market, quick sales, and unrestrained freedom in conducting the business. Agriculture is undoubtedly a manufacture as much as that of broadcloth, and the production of *corn* is the most important branch of that manufacture ; unfortunately it is the most expensive branch of it also : there is therefore a greater risk that that branch would be abandoned than any other. Of course, a well informed legislature ought to have had their attention specially directed towards that point ; but this has unfortunately never been adverted to by us ; and the laws of this country, and the customs that there prevail, in many instances, tend directly to oppose that branch of business.

Every one knows that many more hands are required to carry on the business of aration, than that of grazing ; perhaps the difference, if each of these systems of farming were carried to the highest pitch of perfection



of which they are respectively susceptible, would not be less than as one hundred to one. But were a farmer to attempt to carry on the cultivation of the soil in the manner this would imply, he would find himself at once involved in inextricable difficulties, so that he must of necessity avoid it till these obstructions are removed, however much he may be entreated to go forward.

In the first place, the expense of *cultivating* land, under certain circumstances, is enormous : so that, unless it be in very particular situations, the operator never can be reimbursed : but, instead of adopting such arrangements as to encourage the farmer to go forward in cultivating the soil, he is, in this country, subjected to one very heavy tax in particular, that must of necessity check his operations to an astonishing degree. He is liable to have a tenth part of the whole crop carried away ; not a tenth of the *free* produce after deducting expenses, but one tenth of the *gross* produce even if the whole of that produce should not be sufficient to pay one half of the expense actually incurred : and I have known land cultivated, and with profit, where the whole of the crop for the first year would not be equal in value to the tenth part of the money actually expended on the land before that crop could be obtained from it. Thus are both his capital and his industry highly taxed ; whereas if he shall sit still and do nothing to his land, he is not obliged to pay one tenth of the simple produce which has spontaneously sprung up without any expense incurred by him, but in many cases less than one fortieth part of it. Can any thing, I ask, be more perfectly calculated to arrest the arm of industry in agriculture, and check the produc-

tion of corn, than this system? Yet, while men would seem to be moving heaven and earth to encourage the production of corn, it would be deemed little short of sacrilege in any one, merely to hint, that if ever they expect to have corn produced in abundance, and at a reasonable price, they must begin by removing this grievous obstruction, without which it is vain to expect it ever can be done. Fortunately for America you have guarded against this fore evil in that country. A system which hath tended to depress the agriculture of Europe in general, perhaps more than any other; and to condemn many parts of it to continue a desert, which, but for that circumstance, might have been a paradise.(C)

Another circumstance that imperiously opposes the system of aration in agriculture, is the difficulty of obtaining hands for that purpose. There is a feverish spirit of alms-giving that prevails in this country, which rages at present with such unbounded sway, that it seems to have deprived all orders of persons of the exercise of their reason; and which, if it shall continue a little longer, will effectually stop the production of corn in this Island entirely, and then all other manufactures must follow. In consequence of this *mania*, which so universally prevails, a man who was to oppose any measure that was *held out* to be intended to augment *the comforts of the poor*, would be deemed infamous, however absurd and improper he might see that measure was. A certain description of persons have been, in consequence of this principle, invested by law with powers which no farmer can controul, by which they are enabled to put their hands into the pocket of the farmer,



and to take from thence just whatever they please, in order to *give it to the poor*. And who are those denominated *the poor*, in this case? They are the drunken, the idle, the dissipated part of the community; persons, for the most part, who will not work so long as they have one farthing to spend in the alehouse, and when that is gone they imperiously call for more, to support them in idleness. This description will probably seem to you to be exaggerated; I wish to God it were so, but I am sorry to say this cannot be admitted. I know a considerable tract of country, consisting of several parishes, in which there is only one acting justice of the peace; and, unfortunately for the country, he is one of those who possesses this sentimental regard for the *poor* to such a pitch, that he grudges no expense laid out in that cause; *when it is to come out of the pockets of others*. The consequence is, that when the overseers of any parish within his bounds refuse to give alms to a drunken disorderly fellow, who might work to support himself well, if he would; this man has nothing to do but to go to this *beneficent* justice of the peace, and represent his case in his own way; who, without examination or inquiry, or ever citing the overseers before him to hear their report, generally sends the man home with an order upon the overseers in his pocket, to pay to him such a sum as he himself has said would do; which order they must in this case comply with. To avoid this evil the overseers generally attempt to beat down such idle fellows as low as they can bring them voluntarily to accept, as this, though it be the very reverse of charity, is a less evil than to allow him to get to the full extent of his most exorbitant claims.

Again, the corn-farmer, whose operations must go forward at the proper season, or he must be undone : the farmer, whose beasts of labour must be fed even if their drivers should be absent so as to lay them idle, and thus have his expenses accumulated without cause : the farmer, I say, thus circumstanced, and feeling that with such servants he is doubly, trebly taxed ; is under the necessity to rid himself of them. I say *trebly* taxed. In the first place he is heavily taxed by the wages he must pay to them, without an adequate return for it. In the second place, by the waste he incurs in consequence of his beasts of labour being often thus unnecessarily laid idle : and in the third place, by the parish rates being accumulated to support those very idlers who are called poor, but who live better perhaps than he himself can afford to do. What is the consequence ? To avoid these accumulated evils as much as he can, he lays aside the plough, and does all in his power to banish from the parish every person of the description of a servant or a labourer. To forward this *hopeful* plan of checking the cultivation of the soil, we have seen many publications that have been ushered into the world of late, and associations formed, recommending to magistrates, and in some cases empowering them, to *compel* farmers to give such a rate of wages as they, the magistrates, shall deem right. And what does all this tend to, but to compel the farmer to give up the plough still more and more ? for I have not heard that any one hath as yet proposed to compel the farmer to keep more servants than he himself inclines. To expect under these circumstances, that the production of corn is ever to become a principal object of the English



farmer, is a project equally chimerical as any of those that were contemplated by Don Quixote.(D) You have also, as I think, wisely guarded against this evil in America.

I am almost ashamed thus to lay open to you "the nakedness of this land," or at least the weakness of those who are entrusted with the modification of the political economy of this country; yet more still remains to be said. As if these obstructions were not alone sufficient to check the spirit of aration in this country, other devices have been adopted to strengthen them. Our forefathers considering that the seasons do vary, and that with the same degree of skill and industry more corn would be produced in one year than another; aware of the importance at the same time of guarding against an extraordinary rise of price, or a great depression of it, easily perceived that there was but one possible way of doing that, and of having always abundance even in the most unfavourable seasons; which was, to provide a market for all the surplus corn produced in a year of plenty, at a reasonable price. For, if more grain be not reared in a good year than is sufficient for our own consumption, a deficiency must be felt in a bad year proportioned to the inclemency of the season. With that view a bounty was allowed on the exportation of corn whenever the price fell below a specified rate. This was done with a view to keep up the price in cheap years to such a rate as barely to indemnify the farmer, so as to prevent him from too precipitately abandoning the culture of corn. The principle of this regulation was excellent; and though in its application some very obvious errors were com-

mitted, yet the experience of the best part of a century proved incontestibly that it was, upon the whole, highly beneficial. Under the influence of that law it was found that the grain produced in this country gradually augmented faster than our population, so that it became more than enough to support its own inhabitants, inso-  
much that corn came to be a considerable article of trade, and brought much money into the nation.

But when people are well it seldom happens that they know how to keep themselves so ; they wished to be better : manufacturers made a clamour, and our legislators, regardless of the lesson they might have learnt from the fate of Colbert's institutions in France, were infected with the *rage*, and we now feel what is the consequence of it. The modifications of the corn laws, I have just said, were not perfect. From these defects certain inconveniences began to be felt. In consequence of the bars above stated beginning to operate more powerfully than formerly, and a gradual decrease in the value of money, the quantity of corn produced began to abate, and occasional deficiencies of that article were experienced. Instead of correcting the former defects, and adopting remedies that the circumstances of the case called for ; which was obviously an augmentation rather than a diminution of the bounty, under certain circumstances, our legislators thought proper to pursue a course directly the reverse of this ; and, without formally abolishing the bounty, they virtually did so, by so modifying it as that it could by no means answer those purposes, in regard to the farmer, for which it was originally granted : no corn, therefore, could be then reared by him for the purpose of exportation



in good years ; of course, when a bad season occurred, the deficiency became very great ; the prices rose, and recourse must be had to importation from abroad to a great amount, for the support of our own people. Thus it has happened, that without any material change in the physical state of this universe, we have experienced a woful change in the state of our crops ; and, instead of *ex*-porting corn to the amount in some years of not much less than one million and a half of quarters, which brought in better than two millions sterling per annum, the quantity *im*-ported soon came to exceed the exports ; which has gradually increased till the present moment, when the balance of imports beyond exports amount to nearly one million of quarters, the value of which cannot be less than four millions sterling per annum.(E)

These, Sir, are strong facts, that one would think were altogether sufficient to open the eyes of any person. Yet I do not perceive the smallest indication that that is the case, either with our legislators, or the public at large. Instead of considering, with a rational deliberation, which the importance of the case requires, how these radical evils might be moderated, we see only futile disquisitions about trifling and unimportant circumstances, and (pardon the expression) childish proposals, many of which cannot be carried into practice ; and others, if they could be executed, would prove of no sensible avail.

I cannot but lament that these things are so ; because I see a long train of evils springing from them, as their legitimate offspring, as clearly as possible. Yet I myself am of too little importance as an individual to be at

liberty to indulge the hope, that any thing I could offer to the public on that subject would be adverted to. As this is a subject, however, that must be, *to you*, of considerable importance, because it tends to affect the welfare of millions of people ; and as, among the multiplicity of objects that have claimed your attention, this one may not probably have so forcibly attracted your notice as it has done mine ; I feel myself strongly tempted to add a few words more, without entirely exhausting the subject. It will afford me the satisfaction of thinking that I shall, at least, once in my life, have done what was in my power, by laying open the secret causes of this grievous malady, to alleviate it ; which, though it will be of no avail in this country at present, may possibly, in one way or other, at some future period, serve to guard others from suffering by the same malady.

There is a beautiful concatenation of circumstances which depend upon each other in every operation of nature, so that one primary cause often produces a diversity of effects that extend to an amazing distance, and that do not appear at first sight to be necessarily connected. It affords me much pleasure in any case to be able to trace these, and something of that nature I now experience.

We have seen that tithes and poor's rates have a necessary tendency to drive men away from the business of agriculture, and to diminish the culture of grain, by converting arable lands into pasture ; and that the modern system of corn laws tends to augment this evil. Let us now endeavour to mark the effects of this change (that is, the converting of arable land into pasture) on the community at large, by taking into consideration the numbers of people that the same extent of country can support under the arable and the grazing system.



No description of land that is fit for tillage can produce so much of human sustenance when in grass as when in corn; but the difference in some cases is greater than in others. In very rich land this difference is less than in that of an inferior quality. In the richest land in this island, perhaps the difference can in no case be brought lower than in the proportion of three to one; that is to say, an acre of such land would afford three times at least the quantity of human food while under culture that it could do while in grass. In land of a middling quality the difference will be nearly as ten to one. And if land of a very bad quality be properly improved, and brought to the highest degree of productiveness of which it is susceptible, it will be more than as one hundred to one.

Hence then it follows, that if all the arable land in this kingdom had been laid down to grass at once, a very great diminution of the quantity of human food produced in this island must immediately ensue; and though no augmentation in the number of the people should be made, unless an *immense* importation of grain were to take place (much more than the whole surplus produce of the universe could probably afford) a most destructive famine must be experienced; and of course this evil must be felt in a greater or less degree, as the proportion of ground thus abstracted from the plough shall be greater or less: nor is this the whole of the evil that would accompany such a measure.

As aration, digging, or cultivating by means of manual labour of one sort or other, are the only possible means of augmenting the natural produce of the earth;(F) and as there can be no possible limits

assigned to the amount of the amelioration that may be thus obtained on soils that are only moderately productive, it is certain that without this necessary labour, the earth in every country on the globe must soon become overstocked with people, and universal famine and misery must prevail. It was therefore evidently the will of heaven that man should become an agricultorist; and as a reward for his obedience to that supreme decree, it has been at the same time ordained that, wherever he shall exert his faculties to that end, abundance of food for man must be the necessary consequence: and if these exertions shall not be discontinued, that abundance must perpetually increase, so as to keep pace with the increase of population, whatever that may be. On the other hand, it would seem, that as a punishment for disobedience to that law, it hath been as immutably decreed, that wherever these agricultural exertions shall be slackened where they have once prevailed, the earth shall by degrees revert nearly to its original state, and be no longer in a condition to support the same number of people it formerly did; so that a *few* miserable beings may be starved for want in the same district where millions have formerly lived in abundance.

Without entering into the consideration of the reasons why these things should be so, the evidences that may be adduced in proof that these positions are just, from the present state of the world, and the history of past times, are innumerable. Let but a new village be raised in the most inhospitable desert, fields will gradually spread themselves around it smiling with increasing fertility. Even when a solitary toll keeper steals his span of garden from the waste, its gay luxu-



riance enlivens the senses of the wearied traveller. Those ancient religious establishments, where, in retired solitude, continued for ages, the religious orders sought for some amusement in the labours of the field, a superior fertility to that of the neighbouring country has been gradually and universally conferred upon the land around, which by many persons has been conceived to be a cause for their choice of situation, rather than a consequence of their residence there.

If, again, we take a view of those countries where agricultural industry once prevailed which has now ceased, and whose fertility kept pace with their (to us now) inconceivable population, such as those territories in Asia where Nineveh and Babylon, with other proud and flourishing cities, once stood: if we contemplate the kingdom of Judea and Palestine, whose inhabitants in the days of David and Solomon would have eaten up the whole of its present annual produce in one day: if we contemplate Egypt, Carthage, and the neighbouring states of Africa, the same observations will apply. These cases seem, indeed, to be so utterly inexplicable to those who advert not to the influence of circumstances above alluded to, as to be deemed impossible; and such persons feel disposed rather to contest the best established historical facts than to distrust their own feeble reasoning upon the subject.

But we are not obliged to go to such an immense distance backwards in search of illustrations of these momentous truths. Volumes might be filled with instances of it in modern times. There are even extensive districts in Scotland which formerly supported, while under the plough, a numerous population, which were

abandoned during the seven years of famine that prevailed in the end of the last century, that have now reverted to the state of the most unproductive heath ; while, as a contrast to that, other wastes, which never before yielded any subsistence to man, have been, in consequence of an increased population there, converted into the finest of fields, now waving with the most luxuriant abundance. With these facts under our eye, and which are the result of our own (I might say) *palpable* experience, it is scarcely necessary to seek for other illustrations. But these present themselves in such abundance, that we are only diffculted in choosing which we should select for that purpose. The case of Spain, however, is such a flagrant instance of it, even at our door, that it would be idle to search for more.

In the time of the Moors that part of Spain which was possessed by the Mahometans, who were an industrious and agricultural people, swarmed with inhabitants to an astonishing degree, and possessed a luxuriant fertility unequalled at that time perhaps in any part of Europe. Even in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella, when the industry of these people had been greatly repressed, and their numbers curtailed by the long continued ravages of war, that country still contained a population of TWENTY FIVE MILLIONS of people, who found there abundance of food and to spare. At present the population of Spain does not exceed *eight millions*, and the deterioration that has followed the abandonment of agriculture as a favourite pursuit, is such, that even those *few* inhabitants are only able to draw from it a scanty subsistence, which is scarcely sufficient to furnish them the bare necessities of life. And



does not the present experience of Britain afford, at this instant, a practical illustration of this momentous truth that admits of no dispute? Let those who think otherwise try to account, upon any other principle, for those undeniable facts above stated respecting our commerce of grain. When they do so, I should not think I imposed upon myself a very arduous task, should I undertake to refute their arguments. Should sophisms, however, be resorted to instead of arguments, or hypothetical assumptions be substituted instead of well established facts, I shall not deign to notice them, but allow them to sink under the refutation of succeeding experience. I shall never contend with any one for victory, but for truth alone: and truth, when once announced, will still survive, although it should for a time appear, by the weight of authority or prejudice, to be totally annihilated.

Other circumstances still have a powerful tendency to repress the active operations of agricultural improvements in England, whose influence ought not to be overlooked on the present occasion. As the radical melioration of land is a troublesome and expensive operation, and the returns of that expense can only be expected in the course of many years, no man can engage with spirit and effect in such an enterprise without a certainty of his being permitted to retain the possession of such land for a sufficient length of time to indemnify himself fully for the expense and risk he must incur by such exertions. So far, however, is this inducement to agricultural exertion from being commonly proffered to tenants, that a lease of a proper length for this purpose is altogether unknown; and a great part of the

land in this kingdom is farmed without any lease at all, merely upon a precarious tenure from year to year. And, what appears to be still more wonderful, this precarious tenure seems to give nearly as little uneasiness to the tenant, as it proves satisfactory to the landlord. As the interest of both the parties is evidently hurt by this arrangement, though the welfare of the public is still more essentially injured by it, I was greatly at a loss for some time to account for this seeming apathy in these two classes of men to their own interest. Nor was it till after a very minute examination of the internal state of this country, that it became manifest. As it may prove satisfactory to you to develop these particulars, I shall venture briefly to state the prominent circumstances that effect it. The great object of men of extensive property in this country is to have parliamentary interest; they therefore exert themselves as much as possible to have retainers and dependents who may support that interest at elections for members to parliament. One great source of such influence originates with farmers, many of whom have votes themselves; and they have still a wider influence in consequence of the marriages of their daughters, &c. into the families of voters in boroughs, and other ways. These being in general rather of less respectability than the farmer, and having expectancies from him at his death, are much swayed by him. And as he himself cannot be considered as a free man so long as he depends, in a great measure, upon the will of his lord for a comfortable subsistence, these farmers are found to be the most zealous and steady supporters they have. This, together with the natural desire that all men feel to exercise sway over



others, especially where, as in this case, it does not appear to give much pain to those who submit to it, is a principal reason why gentlemen of landed property in general have a predilection for short leases, or tenants at will, wherever the custom of the country countenances it.

I found more difficulty in satisfying myself about the indifference of the tenants on this head ; but a residence for some time in England has enabled me to discover the causes of that also. It would take up too much room to display the whole ; I shall only just touch upon the principal of them. I have already taken notice of the importance of the *poor's rates* here in regard to the farmer, and the necessity of his adverting to them when he covenants for a lease. By the farmer, the poor's rates can be viewed in no other light than as rent. To him it is the same thing whether he pays the whole of his rent to the landlord, or a part of it to him and another portion of it to the poor ; but there is this difference to him between these two ; that the landlord's rent is a stipulated, fixed sum, and the other variable. When he enters into a lease for a term of years, then, though he contracts to pay only a stipulated sum annually to the landlord, he binds himself at the same time, however, also to pay another sum annually to the poor, which is perfectly unfixed ; and concerning the amount of which at a distant period, he cannot form the most distant conjecture. His land we shall suppose at the beginning of his lease to be worth twenty five shillings per acre, and that the poor's rates are then at five shillings in the pound ; he is therefore able to pay the landlord twenty shillings rent, and no

more. But as he knows the poor's rates are advancing from year to year, and he can set no bounds to the extent of that advance, he is afraid to enter into engagements for a long term of years lest he should thus bind himself to pay more than the land is worth. Should it rise to ten, fifteen, twenty, or twenty five shillings in the pound, as it is in some places, he must be undone ; for supposing he has a hundred acres, this, at twenty five shillings, is 125*l.* per annum, which is, by supposition, the full value of his land ; but should he be obliged to pay 225*l.* or 200*l.* or 175*l.* or even 150*l.* he would be undone. Contemplating these things he hesitates, and is better pleased to have it in his power to give up his lease when he finds he can no longer hold it with profit, than to take the risk of such a precarious burthen.

These are natural sensations, and a conduct, in as far as regards himself, judicious ; but mark the consequence on the public.

A tenant upon a short lease never can engage in a spirited cultivation of the soil. He himself cannot be at the expense of erecting the necessary buildings, and the landlord will naturally wish to avoid it under these circumstances. Much fewer buildings are required for a grass farm than for one in corn : on these accounts, however more productive the farm *might* be under a *proper* course of tillage, it *must* be thrown into grass. But as land that has been laid down to grass in tolerable order, however much it might be improved by being brought occasionally into corn land under a spirited management and judicious culture, would be greatly deteriorated by being torn up and *scourged*, as the phrase is, for a year or two, under the management of one who grasps



only at what he can obtain at present, without any regard to futurity ; it becomes necessary for the landord to guard against this evil, by making stipulations under these short tenures, to prevent the farmer from ploughing up his land under very severe penalties. Thus are millions of acres doomed to remain for ages together covered with ant hills, rushes, moss, and other useless plants ; growing worse and worse from year to year, which might, under another system, have been affording as fine crops of grafs and corn as could be wished ; and going forward in a state of continued progressive improvement from year to year, uninterruptedly for ages, till they became in every part as rich and productive as the most fertile garden. Such has been the progress, and such the present state, of many parts of Belgium ; though the progress there, as well as elsewhere, has not been permitted to go on without many interruptions. Is it possible for any one to see these things, and be able to contemplate them without a sensation of pity for the blindness of those who will not see them, blended with horror at the consequences of such culpable inattention to things of the most serious importance !

If I have been hurried into a warmth in contemplating this important subject that might not perhaps by *some* be deemed altogether suitable to the occasion, I trust, respected Sir, to your known philanthropy and invariable desire to promote the best interests of mankind, for your indulgence on this occasion. I am now declining into the vale of years, and can have no personal interest worth naming in any regulation, political or civil, that can be made. The best of my days may be numbered among those that are past ; and I have

no wish to be gratified respecting external things in this world. Without ambition, without avarice, without envy, and with a perfect good will to all mankind, softened by the too frequent impulses of pity for their weaknesses, if I have any enjoyment in life it is in exercising the wish, ineffectual as it may be, to promote in a small degree the comforts of the rising generation, or rather, to diminish the evils to which man in this world is but too inevitably subjected. These are sensations which you also have felt in a higher degree than most men, and therefore you will be disposed, I doubt not, to make some allowance for a little excess on that head. It was these sensations that induced me, in my last, to object to the income tax as to one that appears to me to be fraught with the most seriously pernicious consequences, and exactly in the same spirit with those legislative acts which, though unperceived at the time they were made, operated with such a destructive certainty the ruin of Spain.

There was a time while this country had some pretensions to rank as an agricultural nation, that the description of men called *country gentlemen* and *yeomen*, bore a distinguished share of respectability in the state, and served, by the simplicity of their manners, the sobriety of their conduct, and the soundness of their judgment, to moderate excesses in government, and to give a kind of stability to the empire. They lived at home respected, and when they took a side in the affairs of government, which was seldom, unless to prevent evident abuses in power, they carried a weight with them that made them be attended to. This arrangement of things we can now only contemplate as one of those



that are *past*. Its influence is gone, though the names remain unchanged. Instead of that laudable wish to preserve the respectability of a family that has been long revered, even in a humble station, (G) every bosom is now inflamed with an eager desire to obtain wealth ; and he who lavisheth that wealth in the greatest profusion is deemed the greatest man ; no matter how it has been obtained. While these ideas prevail, it is impossible for a sober minded man, who wishes to enjoy the tranquillity of rural life in moderation, to indulge in the country these wishes. A Fabius or a Cincinnatus, instead of being revered for their dignified independence of mind, were they to be placed in this country, would be only neglected and despised, perhaps insulted, by some of those pitiful creatures who have raised themselves to wealth by the meanest compliances ; while an Apicius, or a Cataline, who spent in riotous living and unbounded profusion the wealth that belonged not to himself, would be obsequiously courted and admired. The family of such a sober person, whose minds, the younger parts of them especially, have caught the national fever, disdaining the humble pursuits of their progenitors, and despising the independent moderation of their parents, urge them on continually into expenses, that their limited patrimonial income cannot afford, in order to be equal with others ; so that, instead of the tranquillity they seek for, their life is there a perpetual struggle of the most painful sort. Even the most steady and sober minded man is thus unavoidably drawn into expenses that prove embarrassing for him ; and he is obliged at last to sell that little patrimony that had long rendered his progenitors among the soundest pillars of the state.

His posterity from that moment mingle with the crowd, without any stimulus to elevate their ideas above those around them ; and therefore they join as eagerly as others in the universal scramble for wealth. To obtain this object of all men's ardent desires, nothing that does not shock the prejudices of the times (many of which a pure mind would look upon with horror) is judged improper. The moral principle thus weakened, the social virtues become relaxed, and a general dissoluteness of manners, greatly resembling that which prevailed towards the decline of the Roman empire, begins to prevail.

That this picture is nothing exaggerated every sensible person who knows this country must acknowledge. Still, however, a feeble barrier remained to preserve a small share of that country influence that had so nearly been annihilated. To hasten the total fall of this salutary influence, the income tax is most peculiarly calculated. I do not mean to say that this object was in the contemplation of the person who planned it, more than the measures of a similar tendency in Spain were intended by those who proposed them ; but its effects will not be less certain.

From what I formerly said, and have now more fully stated, it is evident that there is no class of men in the community who are literally so poor ; that is, who have so much difficulty to make the two ends honestly meet at the end of the year, as small land owners ; so that to no class of persons whatever could the income tax prove more oppressive. To these persons, then, it ought to have been peculiarly moderated, if it was not meant to annihilate them entirely ; and it is a cruelty



little short of persecution to exact such a high rate of centage upon *them* as that law imposes. And what aggravates the evil is, that it is in fact not only higher in general *to them* than to other descriptions of men in equal circumstances, but it is even considerably higher than the *nominal* rate stated. If a man of that description, for example, is obliged to live above his income, which most of them must do in the present times in spite of every effort to the contrary, What is he to do? He cannot borrow money without mortgaging his land; and not even then without great difficulty, as well as paying a *douceur* to the person who finds it; for which *douceur*, and for the expense of the mortgage, he is not allowed to claim a deduction, though these sums are as certain and inevitable a diminution of his income as the interest of the money borrowed, for which he is allowed a deduction. Thus is he obliged to pay, instead of a tax of ten per cent. on his real income, a real tax of perhaps twelve or fifteen per cent.(H) and that at a time when circumstances are such that he might more easily have paid twenty or thirty per cent. at another time.

Thus it appears that a person of this description is loaded not only with an over proportion *legally* of the tax, but with a great addition to it also, which was evidently not in the contemplation of the legislature when the law was passed, and from which he has no possibility of freeing himself; for the law expressly says that the commissioners are *not* to admit of any deductions but those enumerated in the act; and he must make oath that he has made no deductions but what the act allows; nor is this, nor many others which are equally undenia-

ble and unavoidable diminutions of income, enumerated in that act. Every shilling of his income is thus taxed above what either law or equity could demand ; while to manufacturers and dealers of all sorts, such mitigations are given as puts it within their power *honestly* to avoid every possible over charge of the nature above stated ; for among such persons, and indeed among any persons who were not constrained to the contrary, I do not suppose that the most conscientiously scrupulous would have any hesitation about deducting from a man's income *every unavoidable expenditure or loss that he was obliged to sustain in the course of transacting his business*. Dealers are thus allowed *honestly* to free themselves from such cruel exactions ; but doubtless among these men there are many who have not scrupled to make deductions, in giving in their statements of income, to an infinitely greater amount than those that can be *fairly* authorized ; for no one will believe that the proportion landed property bears to that of the mercantile and manufacturing property in this country is nearly as five to one ; as the payments of the income tax for last year would seem to indicate.(I) Thus is this most useful part of the community loaded with a tax perhaps quadruply more severe than the mercantile part of it. If this species of injustice does not deserve the name of oppression, it doubtless merits the title of an injudicious regulation, which has a most powerful tendency to derange the political economy of the state ; and it is in this point of view I wish to consider it.

To free themselves from this embarrassing situation, the owners of the few small estates that remain, must have the mortification to see them quickly brought to



sale. And who are to become purchasers? Not men who have by industry and frugality obtained possession of a *small capital*, just sufficient to enable them to live with economy upon their estates; for in this case little harm would result from a transfer, to the public at least, when considered only in this point of view. Such persons, if they have common sense, must avoid bringing themselves into this unpleasant situation. These estates fall of course to be purchased by men who have accumulated *great fortunes* in trade or manufactures; or by men who are already in possession of immense estates in land; precisely the two descriptions of persons who, from their situation in life, are the least calculated to promote the agricultural interests of the country; or indeed the welfare of the country almost in any way; because it throws immense influence into the hands of persons, who, from their situation in life, and necessary train of pursuits, have it not in their power ever to form a sound judgment concerning the circumstances that can either affect their own interests, or those of the state to which they belong. Accordingly we find that the most certain forerunner of the destruction of kingdoms in all times past has been an extreme inequality, in point of property; which this regulation has a most direct tendency to promote.

When a man has accumulated a great fortune, he must move in a sphere so much above the line of the lower classes of people in the country who are engaged in rural affairs as a business, that were he even to reside in the country continually with his whole family he cannot become *personally* acquainted with their wants or their wishes; and this is still more so with those who rarely

or never reside upon their estates at all. This is not the case with country gentlemen of smaller estates. These men, by residing continually on the spot, know their farmers individually; feel it is their interest to advert the circumstances that promote or retard their prosperity; listen to their grievances; inquire into the circumstances of the case so as to be able to detect fallacies, and see things as they are: they therefore know what is required for remedying evils when they are really felt, and give a becoming check to unfounded complaints. These men, in consequence of their education and habits of life, are suitable acquaintance for those of the highest rank; and through *their* intervention, these men of high rank have an opportunity of being rightly informed respecting the real state of rural economy, and are thus enabled to convey solid and judicious intelligence and advice respecting rural affairs to ministers and others who are, from their situation in life, still farther removed from judging of it for themselves. Destroy this link in the chain and you break the necessary connexion; you make a total separation between the master and the tenant. There comes then to be only two classes of persons, the rich and the poor; precisely that state of society in which human misery has been observed always to abound to the highest degree. These two classes of persons are thus so far removed from each other that they can hold no direct intercourse together. They can only communicate through the means of *stewards*; a class of men whose interest it clearly is to flatter the one and cajole the other, and deceive both; make each believe that one of the parties is studying to circumvent and betray the other, and that neither of them can have any



salvation but through the mediation of their own care and good offices ; for which each party, particularly the tenants, must liberally reward them ; or what the Irish call middle men, under whom no person deserving the name of a farmer can exist. Thus is established between the landlord and the tenant a state of perpetual jealousy and uninterrupted hostility, open or understood, that must for ever frustrate every attempt that can be made for ameliorating the lot of that most useful of all classes of men in every state, the cultivators of the soil. Every man of sense, spirit, or property, is thus forced to abandon that profession ; and nothing but low-lived knaves and sycophants, whose skill is cunning, and whose pride is deception, can then remain there. Under the influence of such a set of beings what hope is there that improvements can ever go forward !!!

When these things are considered and duly adverted to, is it a wonder to find men in high stations, even when endowed with the most brilliant talents in other respects, talking and acting as mere children on this subject ! We ought rather to wonder if it should be otherwise. Men who are hoodwinked and perpetually made to view objects under a disguised appearance, never can possibly form a true judgment concerning them. But, under these circumstances, to suppose that men of spirit and capital will seriously and in good earnest apply themselves to the laborious and precarious business of agriculture, in a country in which they can enjoy freedom and independence in every other line of business but that alone, is an idea of the most chimerical sort. We must therefore sit down contented with the prospect of depending on other nations for a great part of our

sustenance every year, and thus submit to all the evils that result from a perpetual and great fluctuation of prices, and that species of dependence of mind which *want* is so well calculated to insure. These are evils which must so inevitably flow from the political arrangements above explained, that I think no one who sees them could contemplate them without strong emotion. Nor are they evils at a distance : they have already operated for some time in this country, and they are operating at the moment I write in a powerful manner ; yet no one seems to regard them. No man has assuredly a more serious desire than myself to avoid every thing that could occasion unnecessary disquietude in the nation : but when one sees a torch about to be applied to the most valuable materials of a combustible kind, it is impossible to avoid making some kind of effort to retard the application, were it merely by an useless exclamation. [I have taken care, however, by the mode of publication I have adopted, that this feeble exclamation, if it be heard at all, shall only be heard by those classes of persons on whom it can produce no violent or pernicious effects.]

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured to give you the clearest idea in my power of the internal state of this country in as far as regards the interests of agriculture, and the causes of those phenomena respecting frequent scarcities of provisions which have been of late experienced in this country ; concerning which those who endeavour to form an opinion from our news-papers and political publications, must be very much puzzled. If I view these things differently from those writers, and the public, who form their opinions from those men in gen-



eral, and if I write with a tone of certainty which might seem to indicate a degree of unbecoming presumptuousness in an individual who avowedly holds an opinion different from that of many men of great talents, let not this, I pray you, be attributed to a presumptuous vanity on my part ; it arises merely from a certainty of the ground on which I stand, and my idea of the importance of defending, to the utmost of my power, the breach in which I find myself placed, with a view to save many unsuspecting millions from the miseries that too surely await them should it be abandoned. I consider talents in this case as out of the question. No talents that man can possess, however transcendent they may be, can compensate for the want of the knowledge of facts ; and if men of talents will not bestow the pains that are required to enable them to discover the necessary facts, these very talents may become pernicious instead of useful, because a confidence will thus be acquired which could not otherwise have existed. Let a man be ever so well mounted in travelling through a strange country, if he will not be at the trouble to inquire of those who can inform him the road he should take, he may make great haste, yet never be able to reach the object in view ; whereas another more feeble traveller, who is cautious about inquiring the way, though his powers be much inferior, may reach the object with certainty which the other pursues in vain. Exactly so it is in the present case. If I know the way, and am sensible that others are going wrong, it depends not in the smallest degree on extent of talents, but only on attention to circumstances that have escaped the notice of others ; and that again, is to be attributed solely

to the different situation in life I have occupied from almost any of those who take a lead in the political arrangements of the state, which has enabled me to see and to feel many things that must have totally eluded their observations so as scarcely to have been known to exist. Born as I was a farmer, and being deprived of both my parents before I knew my right hand from my left, I found myself, at the age of fifteen, invested with the whole burthen of a considerable corn farm, and placed at the head of an establishment of twenty persons at least, without one person who was inclined to advise, far less to direct or to controul my actions. I was thus obliged to think, to act, and to feel, when others of my own age were scarcely beginning to observe the most common things. Having an eager desire at the same time for knowledge, and a turn for literary pursuits, I had the good fortune to meet with men of enlarged understanding and comprehensive minds, who, with kindness, were ever disposed to forward my wishes. I was thus introduced to a circle of acquaintance whose views were more liberal, and who moved in a higher sphere than those of my own rank. Thus it is that I have seen and experienced what few others have had opportunities of doing ; and of course have been enabled to judge of them from sources of information that were not accessible to them.

*Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.*

It gives me, worthy Sir, no small pleasure to think that I have it thus in my power, in the evening of life, to communicate some part of the result of these observations to the man in the world who of all others is, I think, the most likely to appreciate them justly ; because I know



no other person in existence who, moving in such an exalted sphere, has given such unequivocal proofs of his sense of the vast importance, in a national point of view, of that spirit of order and economy which results from the cherishing that spirit of moderation which is necessarily connected with rural pursuits.

That you may long continue to enlighten the world by your example, and to enjoy that well earned tranquillity which the prospect of a life so well spent must naturally inspire, in the midst of those friends in whom your soul takes pleasure, is the sincere prayer of,

*Respected Sir,*

*Your most obedient and much obliged,*

*humble servant,*

JAMES ANDERSON.

## NOTES.

(A) See page 25.

WHEN I wrote this article my opinion had been formed upon an occasional inspection of Steele's Navy Lists ; but when I was about to publish this letter I thought it necessary to examine these lists with greater attention, that I might be in no danger of giving an erroneous statement ; and I honestly confess, that the result of this investigation afforded a statement that exceeded my expectation in this particular, as I am persuaded it will do to most of my readers when they shall glance it over as under. This is made out from Steele's Navy list for May, 1800.

N. B. Mr. Steele's List comprehends the whole of the ships *lost, taken, or destroyed*, since the commencement of the war. I have excluded from this list all ships lost by accident ; as also all ships that have been captured and since retaken ; so that no vessel of that description makes its appearance at all, as the retaking balances the capture. With this simplification the list stands thus :



*List of Ships taken or destroyed since the commencement  
of the present War.*

| By Great Britain from                              | France. | Hol-<br>land. | Spain. | Total. | Of which<br>there have<br>been added<br>to the Brit-<br>ish Navy. | By the<br>French and<br>their Allies<br>from Brit-<br>ain. |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|---------------|--------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ships of the line -                                | 42      | 24            | 8      | 74     | 36                                                                | 1.*                                                        |
| Large frigates from 40 }<br>to 50 guns inclusive } | 42      | 10            | 5      | 57     | 22                                                                | Not one.                                                   |
| Ditto from 30 to 40 guns                           | 36      | 9             | 5      | 50     | 18                                                                | Not one.                                                   |
| Ditto from 20 to 30 -                              | 50      | 11            | 3      | 64     | 19                                                                | Not one.†                                                  |
| Sloops of war from 10 }<br>to 20 guns - }          | 83      | 21            | 17     | 121    | 41.                                                               | 12.‡                                                       |
| Under 10 guns                                      | 34      | 9             | 4      | 47     | 6                                                                 | 1.§                                                        |
|                                                    | 287     | 84            | 42     | 413    | 142                                                               | 14.                                                        |

\* The *Berwick* of 74 guns, captured in the Mediterranean, March '95.

† I had also marked the *Danæ*, Lord Proby, of 20 guns, run away with by the crew; but this is excluded as a recapture, she having been formerly taken under the name of *La Vaillante*.

‡ Viz. *Conflagration*, of 14 guns, F.S. burnt at Toulon, to prevent her from falling into the hands of the enemy.

*Alert*, - - - - 18 guns, taken by l'Unite, of 40 guns on the coast of Ireland, May 1794.

*Hound*, - - - - 16 guns, by La Seine and Galatea, coming from the West Indies, July 1794.

*Scout*, - - - - 18 guns, by two French frigates, off Cape Bona, August 1794.

*Experiment* (Lugger) 10 guns, by the Spaniards in the Mediterranean, October 1796.

*Bloom* (Tender) 14 guns, } taken off Holyhead, Feb. 24, 1797.

*Brighton* (Tender) 14 guns, }

*Lacedemonian*, - - 12 guns, taken in the West Indies, May 1797.

*Growler*, - - - 12 guns, taken off Dungeness by two French row boats, Dec. 1797. [1799.

*Mosquito*, - - - 16 guns, taken by two Spanish frigates off Cuba,

*Penelope*, - - - 18 guns, taken by the N. S. Senora del Carmen Spanish frigate in the Mediterranean, July 1797.

*Trincomale*, - - - 16 guns, blown up in an engagement with a French frigate in the Straits of Babelmandel, August. All the crew perished, as well as the French frigate.

§ The *Shark*, - - 4 guns, run away with by the crew into La Hogue, Dec. 11, 1794.

It thus appears, that, by the operations of the war, the naval powers combined against Britain have been diminished to the amount of 74 ships of the line; 57 ditto above 40 guns; 50 frigates from 30 to 40 guns; 64 ditto from 20 to 30 guns; 121 sloops of war from 10 to 20 guns; and 47 smaller armed vessels. Total 413.

Britain has lost one ship of the line; 12 sloops of war from 10 to 20 guns; and one of 4 guns run away with. In all 14.

The number of enemy's ships added to the British navy is 36 of the line, deducting one captured, is 35; 22 large frigates from 40 to 50 guns; 18 ditto from 30 to 40 ditto; 19 ditto from 20 to 30; 41 sloops of war above 10 guns; deducting 12, leaves 29; and 6 smaller vessels; deducting one, leaves 5. In all 128.

So that if the force of both had been equal at the commencement of the war, and none new added on either side, the naval powers of Britain would now exceed that of her opponents by 109 ships of the line; 79 from 40 to 50 guns each; 68 frigates from 30 to 40 guns; 82 from 20 to 30 guns; 149 sloops of war from 10 to 20 guns; and 52 small armed vessels; making 338 ships of the line and frigates, and 201 smaller armed vessels; being a total of 539; no inconsiderable navy in itself! The number of privateers taken in all is 757. And it ought not to be forgotten, that during the greatest part of this war a great part of the national corvettes and small armed vessels, and some frigates, were hired out to individuals to be employed as privateers; so that they may without much impropriety, be ranked among the national armed forces. Respecting the number of seamen respectively taken, if we add the privateers taken from the enemy to the above it makes a total of 1170 armed vessels; and rating these vessels at an average to be only 100 men each (which seems to be too low,) this will make 117,000 men captured or destroyed by us during the war; to counterbalance which, we have only a few merchant ships; say 500, which, at 10 men each, would be 5000; so that there would remain a balance of 112,000 men in our favour: for it must not be forgotten, that the captures and recaptures on either side not being at all taken into the account, a considerable further balance in our favour is thus suppressed, as the number of men in vessels of equal burthen belonging to the enemies far exceeds ours.

(B) See page 36.

For example: Mr. Pitt, Chancellor of the Exchequer of Britain, has done me personally great injustice, by having withheld from me, contrary to express stipulation, the salary that I had justly earned by services performed for the public in the years 1784 and 1785; and that under circumstances which no individual in the kingdom, in his private capacity, could have effected. He cannot allege that the service was not *faithfully* performed, and to the entire satisfaction of all concerned; for if empty praise could be accounted sufficient payment of a debt, I have doubtless received my full share of that from the members of administration and others. The result of these labours has been before the public now fifteen years, under the title of *An Account of the Hebrides*,



&c. of which the public are enabled to judge. In short, he can assign no other reason for his conduct, but that he did it because he *dared*. He conceived the person was too insignificant, or too much averse to give his friends trouble about any thing that concerned only himself, to be worth attending to. It is most certain, that when I agreed to undertake that service, I did it only upon the express conditions that my expenses were in the first place to be paid, and then a proper remuneration given to me for the time and trouble that should be incurred in the service; *because* (these were the express words of my agreement) *the situation of my family did not admit of my applying my time to public services WITHOUT A SUITABLE RECOMPENSE FOR IT*; and this being agreed to, I had not the most distant idea that there could have been any difficulty on this head, otherwise I never should have undertaken it; far less did I then imagine that there could be no *legal* redress obtained in case the first minister of a great nation should forget, or decline to implement a fair contract for services that had been honestly and honourably performed. After, however, having tried every method in my power to obtain payment (unless it was that of troubling my friends to solicit, as a *favour*, what I knew I had a just title to demand as a *right*; a thing that I could on no account demean myself so far as to do) I at last, after the lapse of *twelve* years repeated applications in vain, determined to claim the assistance of the law to obtain *justice*; and it was not till after my papers were put into the hands of an agent for that purpose, that I learnt from the opinion of the first council, that however well founded my action might be against Mr. Pitt, had he been acting as an individual, it was not competent against him while acting as *Chancellor of the Exchequer*; and that therefore I could have no redress, unless I chose to make an application to parliament. This I could not do without troubling friends, whose quiet I too much respect ever to think of any thing of that sort. And thus am I forced to sit down under this shameful piece of—I had almost called it wilful deception; for I really know no other word that seems so well to apply to the case: no doubt but the Chancellor of the Exchequer knew of this circumstance at the time he entered into the contract, although I did not in the smallest degree suspect it. What an idea then must I have of the moral character of a person who was capable of thus deliberately misleading an honest man, and of withholding what was justly due to the father of a family of thirteen children, who all depended upon his single exertions for food and education; one who, in the simplicity of his heart, and the abundance of his zeal for performing a service that he thought of very great national importance if properly done, agreed to do it, merely from a conviction that he should perform a meritorious service to the public, without hurting those who had a natural claim to his exertions in their favour. I have been too much accustomed to think lightly of pecuniary concerns, and too long in the habit of being contented with a little, to be much affected with the loss thus sustained. That others, under similar circumstances, may run no risk of being thus inadvertently misled, to the prejudice of their families, it is fit they should know the risk they run. With that view it is now published; for I trust no one will think so meanly of my talents as to suspect that I could adopt this procedure with any intention of obtaining that which is (*now*) to

me of comparatively very little importance; more especially since those for whom it was chiefly wanted are, by their own exertions, and *without the aid of posts, or pensions, or ministerial favours of any kind*, as independent, in all respects, of Mr. Pitt as he is of them. But assuredly it put the person who was capable, under these circumstances, of withholding a just debt, in such a despicable light in my eyes, that I could not but look down upon him with the most ineffable contempt.

It is not likely that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will ever consider these remarks as deserving of any sort of public notice from him; but it is not entirely impossible that the subject may occur in *private*; and in that case I can have no doubt but he would find little difficulty in making such a statement as, if admitted, would completely vindicate himself. But it ought never to be forgotten, that by the laws of this country no evidence can be admitted until the parties be brought *face to face*. The reasons for this *are* obvious, as, were it otherwise, it would only give room, on many occasions, to add calumny to injustice. If an attempt of that kind is to be made, let me be called upon, and I shall readily attend the summons, in presence of friends on both sides, and the truth will be made manifest. It was with a view to free myself from the imputation of having done any thing of the sort that I now deprecate, that I resolved to publish this note; for having of late, and only of late, and after I found that no other mode of vindicating my rights remained, mentioned these circumstances, without reserve, to several persons, without adverting at the time that what I said might never come to the knowledge of the person whom it concerned, and that thus I might assume the appearance of a private calumniator, I think it necessary to free myself of an imputation of that sort, which I should feel as extremely degrading to my own character; and I have taken this only method that is within my power, to present myself *face to face* before him, and thus to give him an opportunity fairly to vindicate himself, if he shall think that I have, in any respect, done him injustice.

But does it follow that because, under this point of view, I so cordially despise this man, that I must therefore think equally ill of him in all other respects, and oppose and condemn every part of his conduct? By no means. I should then transfer my just contempt from him to myself; which assuredly I have not the most distant intention ever to do. On the contrary, I contemplate his conduct as a minister, in many respects, as deserving the highest degree of applause. I consider his talents as wonderful. I have observed his conduct with attention for many years past; nor have I allowed to escape unnoticed many parts of that conduct which have not much attracted the public attention, and which I have seen, deserved the highest degree of applause. During a period teeming with difficulties and dangers, I have observed him trying to influence, and watching the progress of the public mind, with a cautious patience that few others could have bestowed; and catching it with a degree of certainty, whenever it came to the point aimed at, that surprised me (for I had better opportunities of knowing the public opinion, on some occasions, from my own personal experience than him) while others, of no mean talents, had not got a glimpse of it. Guided by this, as by a safe rudder, he has been able to act with a promptitude, and at the same time a steadiness, that on many occasions



raised the hopes of his opponents to the highest pinnacle of exultation, because they expected that he was to be, by such a conduct, rendered highly unpopular. They were not aware of his secret, and have been invariably disappointed in their expectations. In this great and leading feature of his character, Mr. Pitt undoubtedly far excels any other minister who has appeared in my day ; and in consequence of this he has been enabled to confer very essential services on the state. By the proper exertion of these talents, he has had it in his power to give an effectual check to that destructive spirit of *pillage* which so strongly prevailed in this country at one time, as to give the most serious inquietude to every well disposed person in the island ; and which, thanks to these his exertions, and those of his colleagues, is now nearly subdued. To these exertions we at present are indebted for the possession of whatever can render society dear to the human heart. Seeing all these things, as I did, and marking them as they arose, no man in the island has more cordially co-operated in support of those measures than I have done ; and I have, on all proper occasions, bestowed the applause that I thought just, as I do now, with the less reserve, because I was so fully conscious that it did not proceed from a blind partiality, or servile spirit of adulation.

If I do not bestow an equal degree of applause upon Mr. Pitt as a financier, it is merely because I cannot perceive equal reasons for doing so ; and this I am inclined to attribute in a great measure to the situation in life into which he has been thrown, which precluded him from having an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with those circumstances on which alone a sure foundation can be laid in this important department of government. The science of finance must be grounded on facts, and on facts that are by no means obvious to a young mind. Without these, the efforts of genius oftener tend to lead to error than to truth ; because it inspires a confidence arising from the perception of difficulties overcome, that it would not otherwise have possessed. That kind of experience also in this department, which is acquired in the cabinet, leads still farther astray ; because it only familiarises the mind more and more to the dexterous manoeuvres of deception and intrigue, in the pursuit of which the primary object is in a great measure lost sight of ; and a temporary success in these little arts comes to be considered as inevitable proofs of a decisive knowledge of the subject. For my own part, I have not been able to perceive that Mr. Pitt has, till this hour, ever obtained a single glimpse of the great, simple, efficacious, and easy line of finance, which consists in arrangements that operate like the laws of nature, in an irresistible though imperceptible manner, tending perpetually to add to the comforts of individuals, and augment the prosperity of the nation, at the same time that they furnish a perennial stream of wealth, flowing naturally of itself into the coffers of the public from sources in a great measure unseen, and almost unfelt by any one. Were he to read this sentence I am satisfied he would not understand one word of it. Yet that he is dexterous in those little arts that statesmen have been in the custom of resorting to under the name of financial arrangements, whose essence consists in tricks and cajolment, and in playing off one device to counteract another, no one who has his eyes open will deny. But

miserable is the lot of man when he is reduced to that situation in which those things which ought to excite abhorrence, obtain general applause. Yet such is, and ever has been the case, where the talents of the head have been resorted to in cases of intricacy in place of other more solid acquirements. In the following pages I have endeavoured to glance at a few, and but a very few, of these aberrations ; but the time is not yet arrived in which it would be proper to enter upon them at large ; and the field is too wide to admit of its being done in a hasty production, whose utmost aim is to excite attention and provoke discussion. How much do men of talents mistake the road to the temple of fame when they rely upon the head alone for success, considering as of little avail the more steady regulations of the heart ! What was it that exalted general WASHINGTON to such a deserved pre-eminence among men ? It was not the extent of his talents ; for many men of greater talents than he laid claim to, have passed away without notice. To what circumstance, then, did he owe that extensive influence which enabled him to do so much good among his countrymen ? It was to the steady rectitude of his mind, which would not be turned aside from the right path, even by the softening influences of philanthropy. How many other men might exalt themselves to the most desirable pre-eminence, would they but adopt the same principle as the universal regulator of their conduct, who for the want of it must become too often objects of execration, instead of reverential respect, among succeeding ages ? But this cannot be. Men will be men while this world exists ; and imperfections and errors must abound, that shall be productive of human misery as long as this world shall be suffered to occupy a place in the universe.

I am not unconscious how much these observations run counter to the opinion of the minister and his friends, and a considerable majority of the people at large in this kingdom at the present moment. Nor does this in the least either surprise or disconcert me. Whoever has reflected on any one subject as much as I have done on this, will never be surprised at finding others differ in opinion from him. The succeeding age will judge more impartially on these subjects than the present. I pray to God they may find reason to differ from me in these respects. Should this memorial remain, I wish it to be remarked that it was written in the month of May 1800.

It is after this manner that my mind is disposed to view every human being. No station in life can be so exalted as to make me forget that the person who holds it is a man, fallible like myself, and liable to err. And, the higher his rank, the more liable he is to err, because he is less likely to be made to know himself, by the rubs to which he must be exposed in his progress through life. I shall in the language of Shakespeare, endeavour to

Speak of every man as he is,  
Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.

Those in high stations in particular, in general ought to be viewed with a lenience rather approaching to pity, than with a harsh asperity ;

K



for many of their errors are the result of ignorance alone, and that arises from the seductions of pleasure, which those who have never been exposed to the temptation have no merit in having been able to shun.

(C) See page 39.

Observe, the objection here urged against the tithe does not go to abolish that tax, but only so to modify it as to prevent its becoming oppressive to the *industrious improver* only. Were it rendered fixed and definite, so as to affect the slothful in all cases to the same degree as the industrious (as it is in Scotland) the objection would be removed.

(D) See page 42.

I am perfectly aware of the *imprudence*, in the common acceptance of that word, of publishing this part of my letter; and of the obloquy I shall probably incur on that account. I shall be accused of being a cruel hard hearted man, who wishes to abridge the comforts of the poor. Conscious, however, that I deserve none of these epithets, and nothing afraid that any part of my conduct through life will give countenance to such allegations, I totally disregard them. I am anxious to promote the real interests of the poor, perhaps as much as any of those who talk much of them, and much more than many of them; but I shall not be deterred in their cause, to expose the glaring iniquity of supporting these shameful abuses. I consider it not simply as a weakness, but a positive wickedness in men, who, in order to obtain a little temporary applause, join in bolstering up a cruel system of police, which, under the specious name of humanity, tends to destroy the nerve of industry; to corrupt the morals of the lower classes of the people, to rob the industrious householder, in order to pamper the disorderly; and to introduce an infinity of other abuses, which might fill many volumes to enumerate. The tender mercies of such persons are, indeed, cruelties. Some of these evils are already felt; others are apprehended and dreaded, though no one dares to speak of a remedy, lest he should be stigmatized as inhumane: but half the evils are not yet foreseen that will result from this source. A time will come when men will say, "What a fortunate situation were our ancestors placed in at the end of the 18th century. The evil had not then attained to such a height, but that remedies might have been still applied. But they fanned the flame instead of extinguishing it. Now, it has spread universal desolation around; and we, miserable, are become the slaves of the vilest of mankind!" I shall be gone before the time approaches, but this paper may remain.

It will be observed that I state the *farmers* as the chief sufferers in this case; because, as the poor's rates are assessed in proportion to the rent paid by the person occupying ground or houses, the amount of rent in proportion to the income of a farmer is infinitely higher than in other professions. A master manufacturer, or merchant, who pays one hundred pounds a year of rent, has an income in general of more than ten times that of a farmer who pays the same rent. Very often he is able to live at a hundred times the rate of the other; so

that it may be said to be a tax imposed exclusively on landed property. To what rate it may rise at last no one can form a conjecture ; but it is advancing with hasty strides. In one parish in the county of Essex the poor's rates are now at the rate of twenty five shillings in the pound ; that is to say, for every twenty shillings of rent paid to the proprietor, the tenant pays *twenty five* shillings to the poor !!! Nay, I do not write hastily, but with due deliberation. The fact is so ; nor can any say it will stop here.

(E) See page 44.

Few authors have a better title to the very liberal applause that his writings have obtained for him than Dr. Adam Smith ; but on this subject, in his great work on the Wealth of Nations, he has done harm. No sooner did his work fall into my hands than I perceived the probable evil that would result from a mistake in a man so justly celebrated ; and I embraced the first opportunity that occurred of pointing out the fallacy of his mode of reasoning on the corn laws. This is done in the P. S. to the twelfth letter in the Observations on the Means of exciting a Spirit of National Industry, which was published in the year 1775, a copy of which was transmitted to him through the intervention of our common friend Dr. Cullen. This was the commencement of a friendly intercourse that subsisted between us during the whole after period of his life. He never entered upon the subject of the corn trade in conversation with myself ; but he did so with Dr. Cullen, who informed me that he had told him that he intended to answer these remarks, which he said I might consider as a great compliment, as he never heard Dr. Smith say as much of any other opponent. I understood afterwards that he had made inquiries concerning some facts I had stated ; but he never made the answer he proposed. The principles I there endeavoured to establish were more fully developed in a pamphlet afterwards printed (1777) on the Corn Laws, now out of print. These principles have been but too fully established by the events that have succeeded since that time.

(F) See page 46.

In the course of a letter it was impossible to enter upon the proof of every position laid down that depends upon the technical knowledge of agriculture as a profession, such as that which is here stated ; but the writer does not hesitate to state these facts on his own knowledge, which he should find no difficulty in proving, were this a proper place for entering into this discussion. It is in his contemplation to do so ere long in another place (Recreations in Agriculture, &c.) should no unforeseen circumstance prevent it.

(G) See page 56.

There is at this moment an estate in Berwickshire, I believe under one hundred pounds a year rental, called *Beamerfide*, which belonged to



a family of the name of Haig, in the time of king Robert Bruce, concerning which the following lines are preserved of Thomas the Rhymer, who lived not long after that period :

“ Happen what may, and come what tide,  
Haig shall be laird of Beamerfide.”

It belongs at this moment to the same family. Let speculatists say what they will, men cannot avoid paying some respect to this circumstance, even in the present day, when the levelling principle is so predominant.

(H) See page 58.

That this statement is below the truth, will appear from this circumstance. A man possessing an estate of four hundred pounds is obliged, we shall say, because of the pressure of the times, to borrow 200*l.* (and 200*l.* to such a person is a great deal ;) for this, if he must grant a mortgage, he must pay at least 60*l.* Here, then, he receives only 140*l.* for which he pays of interest 10*l.* His creditor may, if he pleases, demand his money the next year, when instead of 140*l.* he must pay 200*l.* together with the interest, so that he loses in all 70*l.* instead of 10*l.* that he is allowed to deduct. And if he must borrow other money to replace this, nearly the same operation must be repeated, or his estate may be sold by distress ; and this independent of the douceur to his agent. I will not dwell on this picture.

(I) See page 59.

It appears that of seven millions paid by the income tax, five and an half millions are paid by landed proprietors, and one and an half millions by the mercantile and manufacturing interest. This is not quite at the ratio of 4 to 1 ; but as every person who is a dealer has a power to put himself under the commercial commissioners ; and as many dealers are proprietors of land to a great amount, I conceive that their estates, if added to the others, would make the proportion at the least 5 to 1, as in the text.



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RECREATIONS IN  
AGRICULTURE,  
*NATURAL HISTORY, ARTS,*  
AND  
MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE.

---

By JAMES ANDERSON, L.L.D. F.R.S. & F.S.A. E.

Honorary member of the Society of Arts, Agriculture, &c. *Bath* ; of the Philosophical Society, *Manchester* ; of the Agricultural Society *Attingham* ; of the Philosophical Society, *Newcastle* ; of the Society for promoting Natural History *London* ; of the Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Belles Letters, *Dijon* ; of the Royal Society of Agriculture, *St. Petersburg* ; of the Royal Economical Society, *Berlin* ; of the Philosophical Society, *Philadelphia* ; correspondent member of the Royal Society of Agriculture, *Paris* ; and author of several performances.

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BACON.

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" And form to his the relish of their souls."

AKENSIDE.

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